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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Distribution
Washington 25, D.C.

May 1, 1944

THE PROBLEM:

FACT SHEET ON MILK CONSERVATION

To sell the trade, the press and the general public on the need for milk conservation ... and for sales quotas on milk, cream, and milk byproducts during May, and June, the months of peak milk output.

BACKGROUND ON THE PROBLEM:

We want to get across the reasons why there is no need for handlers to dump milk down the drain because "WFA regulations won't let them sell it." Such a charge is without foundation, and may endanger the success of the milk conservation program.

THE FACTS:

No milk need be wasted because of the sales quotas contained in Food Distribution Order 79. Quotas have been raised for the 2 months of heaviest milk production and market agents administering this order are authorized to make further individual handler adjustments in sales quotas, on the basis of petitions for relief, whenever necessary to obtain full utilization of the milk. Since there are now 34 agents located in all sections of the country, dealers are assured a prompt hearing and decision on their problems by men who know the local situation.

MILK CONSERVATION IS A NECESSARY WAR MEASURE:

Without some sort of limitation on fluid milk and cream sales, more and more milk and cream would go into bottles and less and less to creameries, condensaries, cheese factories and dried milk plants. We know this is true because it actually happened. In the 2 years between 1941 and 1943, fluid milk and cream sales to civilians increased from 31.8 billion to 38.1 billion pounds (excluding milk used by farmers and milk retailed by farmers themselves). During 1943, production of 4 war-vital dairy products -- butter, cheddar cheese, evaporated milk and skim milk powder -- dropped. In view of the growing war requirements for manufactured dairy products (they increased from 5.4 billion pounds milk equivalent to 16.7 billion pounds between 1941 and 1943), it was essential that this trend be halted. FDO 79 was issued to do that job.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION ORDER 79:

At present, this order is in effect in all cities of 50,000 population or over. Each of these cities is considered a milk sales area and in each area, May and June sales of fluid milk, cream and fluid byproducts (including chocolate drink, cottage cheese, and buttermilk) have been pegged at 100 percent of June 1943 sales. Consumption of these products in June 1943 was at the highest level on record.

DEALER RATIONING VS. CONSUMER RATIONING:

FDO 79 was designed to forestall coupon rationing of fluid milk. If it stabilizes fluid sales and thus insures sufficient milk for manufacturing uses ... sufficient milk, that is, to meet the expanding requirements which have resulted from the necessity of feeding a growing portion of our military forces overseas where milk in fluid form is often unobtainable ... the order will be successful.

It is hoped that coupon rationing of fluid milk and cream can be avoided because the perishability and widely varying consumption of milk by age groups and

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geographical localities would make it extremely difficult to ration milk equitably.

So far, cooperation by the trade and consumers with the provisions of FDO 73 has been excellent. There have been a few violations by individual dealers, but violations by markets as a whole have dropped to zero.

NEXT FEW WEEKS MOST CRITICAL MARKETING PERIOD:

From now until the end of June, milk production will be very heavy. It always is seasonally high during May and June, but this year an even greater percentage than usual of total annual production is expected to be concentrated during these 2 months.

In view of labor and container shortages and transportation difficulties, it will be difficult for many milk handlers to process all the milk with which they will be supplied above their milk, cream and byproducts quotas. It will mean utilizing all available manufacturing outlets to capacity. It will require a high degree of inter-industry cooperation to assure that trucking and other facilities are utilized as efficiently as possible. It will require a "make do" spirit and a recognition of the essential nature of the program. In other words, it will be a tough job, but one which must be done.

QUOTAS DURING THE SPRING FLUSH:

The cream and byproducts quotas, which were at 75 percent of June 1943 sales, have been increased to 100 percent for May and June. This action will help to obtain full utilization of all milk. Although improving prospects for total milk production this year and such factors as the manpower shortage justify this temporary adjustment of the quotas, they cannot be removed completely even during the peak production season. It would not be good strategy on the food front. The spring flush in milk production will provide us with our best opportunity this year to manufacture a large portion of the dairy products which will be needed on the war fronts and on the home front. If we do not take advantage of this opportunity, we may have to do with less butter, cheese, evaporated milk and milk powder than essential requirements call for. Or we could reduce milk consumption quite sharply during the fall and winter and gain extra milk for processing in that way.

The most convenient, least disruptive way, however, would be to hold the May-June quotas, and do our best to get the "surplus" into manufacturing plants.

OUTLOOK FOR FALL:

It is possible that quotas might have to be cut this fall even if sales are limited this spring. Milk production may not hold up as well as is now anticipated. Or changes in the military situation may require a steep increase in the quantity of certain dairy products needed by our armed forces overseas.

If the situation does not change materially, checking sales this spring will mean as much milk to drink this fall as we have been drinking. If it does change, the quotas will cushion the adjustment civilians will have to make come the months of seasonally low milk output.